

## CARBAMAZEPINE (TEGRETOL)

Carbamazepine is an FDA-approved medication for partial seizures with complex symptomatology (psychomotor, temporal lobe), generalized tonic-clonic seizures (grand mal), mixed seizure patterns, trigeminal neuralgia. It is also valuable for treatment of chronic neuropathic pain.

The tablets come in 100 mg and large sizes. The maximum planned dose is 600 mg taken twice a day (morning and near bedtime). The final dose can vary depending on how well it works for you and your tolerance of the medication.

Start with one 100 mg tablet nightly for one week. In the second week, you should start taking a tablet in the morning as well as in the evening. Stay at that level for one week. You will continue raising the dose on a weekly basis according to this table:

	<b>Insert Dates</b>	<b>Morning</b>	<b>Evening</b>	<b>Daily Dose</b>	
Week One		0	1 tablet	100 mg	
Week Two		1 tablet	1 tablet	200 mg	
Week Three		1 tablet	2 tablets	300 mg	
Week Four		2 tablets	2 tablets	400 mg	Call Office
Week Five		3 tablets	3 tablets	600 mg	
Week Six		4 tablets	4 tablets	800 mg	
Week Seven		5 tablets	5 tablets	1000 mg	Call Office

You should call your doctors office at the end of week 4 when you are taking 400 mg per day before going any higher.

If you find a dosage level that is satisfactory, there is no reason to increase the medication. If, after you have increased the medication, you find that the previous -- that is, lower--dose was just as effective, it would be better to use the lower dose.

If you find that side effects are such that you feel uncomfortable increasing the dose, please call and it is likely that you will remain at that dose for an extra week or two before raising to the next dose.

There are a number of side effects to know about.

Some people get a cognitive side effect that clouds thinking. For some individuals, this

will occur at the lowest dose and will completely preclude raising the dose any further. If this happens, it is likely that you are intolerant to the medication, and you will need a different medication. For many people, this side effect is dose-related and occurs beyond the doses described above.

Second, blood counts and liver functions must be monitored by taking Carbamazepine. Initially, this will be done monthly for 3 months and then every 3 months as long as you take the medication.

**CARBAMAZEPINE (By mouth)**  
**Carbamazepine (kar-ba-MAZ-e-peen)**

**Treats different types of seizures. Also used to treat nerve pain and bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness.**

**Brand Name(s): Tegretol-XR, Carbatrol, Tegretol, Epitol, Tegretol XR, Equetro, DispenseQuick Carbamazepine**

There may be other brand names for this medicine.

**When This Medicine Should Not Be Used:**

You should not use this medicine if you have had an allergic reaction to carbamazepine or to certain medicines for depression such as amitriptyline, desipramine, imipramine, protriptyline, and nortriptyline. You should not use this medicine if you have ever had bone marrow depression (low blood counts). Do not use this medicine if you have used an MAO inhibitor (MAOI) such as selegiline (Eldepryl®), isocarboxazid (Marplan®), phenylzine (Nardil®), or tranylcypromine (Parnate®) within the past 14 days. Do not use this medicine if you are pregnant.

**How to Use This Medicine:**

**Tablet, Long Acting Tablet, Long Acting Capsule, Chewable Tablet, Liquid**

- Your doctor will tell you how much of this medicine to use and how often. Do not use more medicine or use it more often than your doctor tells you to.
- Swallow the **extended-release tablet** or **extended-release capsule** whole. Do not crush, break, or chew it. Do not use an extended-release tablet that is cracked or chipped.
- If you cannot swallow the extended-release capsule, you may open it and pour the medicine into a small amount of soft food such as pudding, yogurt, or applesauce. Stir this mixture well and swallow it without chewing.
- The **chewable tablet** must be chewed before you swallow it.
- Measure the oral liquid medicine with a marked measuring spoon, oral syringe, or medicine cup.

**If a dose is missed:**

- If you miss a dose or forget to use your medicine, use it as soon as you can. If it is almost time for your next dose, wait until then to use the medicine and skip the missed dose. Do not use extra medicine to make up for a missed dose.

**How to Store and Dispose of This Medicine:**

- Store the medicine in a closed container at room temperature, away from heat, moisture, and direct light.
- Ask your pharmacist, doctor, or health caregiver about the best way to dispose of any leftover medicine after you have finished your treatment. You will also need to throw away old medicine after the expiration date has passed.

- Keep all medicine away from children and never share your medicine with anyone.

**Drugs and Foods to Avoid:**

**Ask your doctor or pharmacist before using any other medicine, including over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal products.**

- There are many other drugs that can interact with carbamazepine. Make sure your doctor knows about **all** other medicines you are using. Some medicines that can interact include heart medicines, seizure medicines, antidepressants, pain medicines, and medicines to treat infections.
- Tell your doctor if you are using delavirdine (Rescriptor®).
- Birth control pills, implants, or shots will not work while you are using this medicine. To keep from getting pregnant, use another form of birth control such as condoms or a diaphragm with contraceptive foam or jelly.
- Do not eat grapefruit or drink grapefruit juice while you are using this medicine.
- Tell your doctor if you are using any medicines that make you sleepy. These include sleeping pills, cold and allergy medicine, narcotic pain relievers, and sedatives.
- Do not drink alcohol while you are using this medicine.

**Warnings While Using This Medicine:**

- Make sure your doctor knows if you are breast-feeding, or if you have glaucoma, liver disease, kidney disease, heart disease, or if you have ever had a mental illness. Tell your doctor if you have had an allergic reaction to any other medicines (especially seizure medicines).
- Using this medicine while you are pregnant can harm your unborn baby. Use an effective form of birth control to keep from getting pregnant. If you think you have become pregnant while using the medicine, tell your doctor right away.
- Do not stop using this medicine suddenly without asking your doctor. You may need to slowly decrease your dose before stopping it completely.
- Your doctor will need to check your blood or urine at regular visits while you are using this medicine. Be sure to keep all appointments.
- Make sure any doctor or dentist who treats you knows that you are using this medicine. This medicine may affect the results of certain medical tests.
- This medicine may make you dizzy or drowsy. Avoid driving, using machines, or doing anything else that could be dangerous if you are not alert.

**Possible Side Effects While Using This Medicine:**

**Call your doctor right away if you notice any of these side effects:**

- Allergic reaction: Itching or hives, swelling in your face or hands, swelling or tingling in your mouth or throat, chest tightness, trouble breathing.
- Blistering, peeling, red skin rash.
- Change in how much or how often you urinate.
- Dark-colored urine or pale stools.
- Chest pain, fast or uneven heartbeat.
- Fever, sore throat, or sores in your mouth.
- Nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, pain in your upper stomach.
- Problems with balance, walking, or speech.
- Shortness of breath, cold sweat, and bluish-colored skin.
- Swelling in your hands, ankles, or feet.
- Unusual bleeding, bruising, or weakness.
- Yellowing of your skin or the whites of your eyes.

**If you notice these less serious side effects, talk with your doctor:**

- Anxiety, confusion, depression, restlessness, or agitation.
- Diarrhea, constipation, or upset stomach.
- Dizziness, drowsiness or unsteady on your feet.
- Dry mouth.
- Headache, back pain.
- Vision changes.

**If you notice other side effects that you think are caused by this medicine, tell your doctor.**

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